the Scholastic Aptitude Test vs. 95% and 75% of Catholic-school students, respectively, Catholic-school students scored an average of 815 on the SAT. By shameful contrast, the small ''elite'' of public-school students who graduated and took the SAT averaged only 642 for those in neighborhood schools and 715 for those in magnet schools.

In 1993 the New York State Department of Education compared city schools with the highest levels of minority enrollment. Conclusions: ''Catholic schools with 81% to 100% minority composition outscored New York public schools with the same percentage of minority enrollment in Grade 3 reading (+17%). Grade 3 mathematics (+10%), Grade 5 writing (+6%), Grade 6 reading (+10%) and Grade 6 mathematics (+11%).''

Yet most of the elite, in New York and elsewhere, is resolutely uninterested in the Catholic schools' success. In part this reflects the enormous power of teachers' unions, fierce opponents of anything that threatens their monopoly on education. In part it reflects a secular discomfort with religious institutions.

I myself have felt this discomfort over the years, walking past Catholic schools like St. Gregory the Great, near my Manhattan home. Every morning, as I took my sons to public school, I couldn't help noticing the well-behaved black and Hispanic children in their neat uniforms entering the drab parish building. But my curiosity never led me past the imposing crucifix looking down from the roof, which evoked childhood images of Catholic anti-Semitism and clerical obscurantism.

Finally, earlier this year, I ventured in, and I was impressed. I sat in for example, as fourth-grade teacher Susan Viti conducted a review lesson on the geography of the Western United States. All the children were completely engaged and had obviously done their homework. They were able to answer each of her questions about the principal cities and capitals of the Western states—some of which I couldn't name—and the topography and natural resource of the region. ''Which minerals would be found in the Rocky Mountains?'' Miss Viti asked. Eager hands shot up. Miss Viti used the lesson to expand the students' vocabulary, when the children wrote things down, she insisted on proper grammar and spelling.

I found myself wishing that my own son's fourth-grade teachers at nearby Public School 87, reputedly one of the best public schools in the city, were anywhere near as productive and as focused on basic skills as Miss Viti. Both my boys's teachers have wasted an enormous amount of time with empty verbiage about the evils of racism and sexism. By contrast, in Miss Viti's class and in all the other Catholic-school classes I visited, it was taken for granted that a real education is the best antidote to prejudice.

Miss Viti earns $21,000 a year, $8,000 less than a first-year public-school teacher, ''I've taught in an all-white, affluent suburban school, where I made over $40,000.'' she says. ''This time I wanted to do something good for society, and I am lucky enough to be able to afford to do it. I am trying to instill in my students that whatever their life situation is now, they can succeed if they work hard and study.''

You might expect liberals, self-styled champions of disadvantaged children, to applaud the commitment and sacrifice of educators like Susan Viti. You might even expect them to look for ways of getting government money to these underfunded schools. Instead, they've done their best to make sure the wall of separation between church and state remains impenetrable. Liberal child-advocacy groups tout an endless array of ''prevention'' programs that are supposed to stave off delinquency, dropping out of school and even pregnancy—yet they consistently ignore Catholic schools, which always succeed in preventing these pathologies.

Read the chapter on education in Hillary Clinton's ''It Takes a Village.'' Mrs. Clinton advocates an alphabet soup of education programs for poor kids, but says not a word about Catholic schools. Similarly, in his books on education and inner-city ghettos, Jonathan Kozol offers vivid tours of decrepit public schools in places like the South Bronx, but he never stops at the many Catholic schools that are succeeding a few blocks away.

Why are Catholic schools taboo among those who talk the loudest about compassion for the downtrodden? It's hard to escape the conclusion that one of the most powerful reasons is liberals' alliance with the teachers' unions, which have poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the campaign coffers of liberal candidates around the country. Two weeks ago I attended the National Education Association convention in Washington, a week-long pep rally for Bill Clinton punctuated by ritual denunciations of privatization.

Before the teachers' unions rise to political power, it was not unusual to see urban Democrats like former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo support government aid to Catholic schools. Mr. Cuomo's flip-flop on this issue is especially revealing. In 1974, when he first ran for public office, Mr. Cuomo wrote a letter to potential supporters: ''I've spent more than 15 years . . . arguing for aid to private schools,'' he wrote. ''If you believe aid is a good thing, then you are the good people. If you believe it, then it's your moral obligation, as it is my own, to do something about it. . . . Let's try tax-credit plans and anything else that offers any help.''

Mr. Cuomo soon learned his lesson. In his published diaries he wrote: ''Teachers are perhaps the most effective of all the state's unions. If they go all-out, it will mean telephones and vigorous statewide support. It will also mean some money.'' In his 1982 campaign for governor, Mr. Cuomo gave a speech trumpeting the primacy of public education and the rights of teachers. He won the union's enthusiastic endorsement against Ed Koch in the Democratic primary. Over the next 12 years, in private meetings with Catholic leaders, Gov. Cuomo would declare that he still supported tax relief for parochial school parents. Then he would take a completely different position in public. For example, in 1984 he acknowledged that giving tax credits for parochial-school tuition was ''clearly constitutional'' under a recent Supreme Court decision—but he refused to support such a plan.

Politically controlled schools are unlikely to improve much without strong pressure from outside. Thus, the case for government aid to Catholic schools is now more compelling than ever. If only to provide the competitive pressure to force state schools to change. And the conventional wisdom that government is constitutionally prohibited from aiding Catholic schools has been undermined by several recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions.

SUCKER'S TRAP

Since the powerful teachers' union vehemently oppose any form of government aid to Catholic schools, reformers are often skittish about advocating vouchers or tuition tax credits, fearing that will end the public-school reform conversation before it begins. But to abandon aid to Catholic schools in the name of public-school reform is a sucker's trap. We have ended up with no aid to Catholic schools and no real public-school reform either.

Catholic schools are a valuable public resource not just because they profoundly benefit the children who enroll in them. They also challenge the public-school monopoly, constantly reminding us that the neediest kids are educable and that spending extravagant sums of money isn't the answer. No one who cares about reviving our failing public schools can afford to ignore this inspiring laboratory of reform.

HONORING THE TRI-VALLEY TIGERS

HON. BILL BAKER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Mr. BAKER of California. Mr. Speaker, in the past year, America has witnessed Cal Ripken become the new Iron Man, Michael Jordan return to basketball, and the centennial Olympic games take place in Atlanta. These have been signal events in modern sports history.

Yet for my own home region, the East Bay of San Francisco, an even more exciting event took place when, in late August, the Alacosta Tri-Valley Tigers took second in the U.S. National Babe Ruth Tournament in Manteo, NC. The Tigers are a Babe Ruth team that posted an undefeated regular season record and an overall record of 59–5. In addition, they won the State and regional titles on the way to the contest for the national title.

Ranging in ages from 16 to 18, these 17 young men and their four coaches have brought pride and dedication to their remarkable efforts. They learned the value of team commitment, of hard, concentrated effort, and had a lot of fun along the way. Their performance in post-season play was outstanding, and as runners-up in the national championship game, they brought great credit to themselves, their coaches, and to the whole East Bay.

While there may be momentary disappointment over not winning the national title itself, this in no way diminishes the sterling performance of the Tigers at every level of play. Along with their parents and neighbors, I am very proud of each of them and am pleased to recognize them in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for their sportsmanship, tenacity, and all-around excellence.

As Ernie Banks might say, when it comes to the Tri-Valley Tigers, ''Let's play two.''

DELAURO HONORS VINCENT CHASE OF STRATFORD

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 4, 1996

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, on Friday, September 6, 1996, State Representative Vincent Chase will be honored with a dinner-roast. Representative Chase has served in the Connecticut State Legislature for 16 years and recently announced that he will not be seeking reelection. It is my great pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to Vinnie and to congratulate and thank him for him many years of public service.